

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The replacement drawing sheet, which is presented in **Attachment A**, includes changes to Figures 6A and 6B. Specifically, changes were made to indicate the structure of power generating regions 11a, 11b, 12a, 12b, 13a and 13b. This replacement sheet, which includes Figures 6A and 6B replaces the previous sheet which also included Figures 6A and 6B.

Attachment A: Replacement Drawing Sheet

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application in light of the amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 5-8 are pending. Claims 1-4 are withdrawn. Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the Examiner's allowance of claim 6.

Status of the Specification

Accompanying this response, Applicants are submitting replacement drawing sheet No. 6 of 13. Drawing sheet No. 6 contains Figs. 6A and 6B. The Figures have been amended to indicate the structure of power generating regions 11a, 11b, 12a, 12b, 13a and 13b. No new matter has been added.

The Specification has been amended to correct a clerical error. Specifically, on page 19, lines 4-5, the reference item referring to the vase section should read 37b and not 37a. No new matter has been added.

Claim Rejections

Claims 5, 7 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph for failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Examiner contends that claims 5, 7 and 8 contain subject matter not supported by the original disclosure. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

In the previous Amendment, independent claim 5 was amended to recite "separating the power generating region in a direction crossing the direction of series connection of the solar cells on the supporting member." The Examiner contends that this step is new matter. The Examiner cites Specification page 11, beginning at line 10, as disclosing that the power generating regions are formed by separating the sub-modules. However, the Specification page 12, lines 7-11, discloses that "[t]he solar cell sub-module 13 is divided into two power generating regions 13a and 13b by a

laser separated portion 7.” Clearly, the specification discloses separating the solar cell sub-module. Therefore, Applicants submit that independent claim 5 is supported by the written disclosure. Claim 8 depends from claim 5, and Applicants submit that claim 8 is also supported by the written disclosure for at least the same reasons as claim 5.

Independent claim 7 was amended to recite “said resin also serving to bond together the metal base and base section.” The Examiner contends that this is new matter. Applicants respectfully disagree. The Specification, at page 18, line 21 through page 19, line 7 discloses that “wiring member 36 is sealed in an EVA resin between the metal base 31 and the base section 37b.” A person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would know that EVA resin has adhesion properties. Because the Specification discloses that the wire member is sealed in EVA between the metal base 31 and the base section 37b, a person of ordinary skill would understand that the EVA resin also serves “to bond together the metal base and base section.” Therefore, Applicants submit that independent claim 7 is supported by the written disclosure.

Withdrawal and reconsideration of this rejection is requested.

Claims 5 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Examiner contends that claims 5 and 8 are indefinite because “it is not clear what effect the separation step has on the structure of the solar cell module.” The Examiner states that “the specification and the drawings fail to show the relationship between the solar cells and the separated power regions.” The present Amendment is accompanied by replacement drawing sheet No. 6, which amends Figures 6A and 6B. Figures 6A and 6B have been amended to indicate the structure of power generating regions 11a, 11b, 12a, 12b, 13a and 13b. Applicants submit that the amendment to Figures 6A and 6B now clearly show the relationship between the solar cells and the separated power regions as described in the written disclosure. Withdrawal and reconsideration of the rejection is requested.

Claims 5 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Younan et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,575,861 in view of Tennant, U.S Patent No. 4,321,416 and JP 11-195803. This rejection is respectfully traversed. None of theses references, nor their combinations renders these claims obvious.

The Examiner contends that because the step of “separating the power generating region” recited in claim 5 is indefinite and unsupported, it is unclear hw the separation affects the module. Applicants submit that, for the reasons discussed above, the step of “separating the power generating region” is neither indefinite nor unclear. The combination of Younan et al., Tennant, and JP 11-195803 neither suggest nor disclose, singly or in combination, the invention of claim 5. Further, the step for preparing a plurality of solar cell modules is broken down into four separate sub-steps. It is not seen that any of the cited references or their combination teach or suggest these four sub-steps. Claim 8 is allowable based upon its dependence from Claim 5. Withdrawal and reconsideration of the rejection is requested.

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dillard, U.S. Patent No. 5,928,437 in view of Tennant. This rejection is respectfully traversed. Neither reference, nor their combination renders this claim obvious.

As explained above, Claim 5 now includes four sub-steps which define the steps for preparing a plurality of solar cell modules. These steps are not taught by either reference, nor would their combination suggest these four steps. Accordingly, Claim 5 is believed to be allowable.

The examiner stated that the terms “sub-module” and “power generating region” were not given any patentable weight. It is believed that in the context of the new sub-steps these terms are given specific meanings which must be taken into consideration. When that is done, it is clear that the references do not teach or suggest the sub-steps.

Claim 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the admissions of prior art within the present application in view of JP-10-082152. This rejection is

respectfully traversed. JP '152 does not disclose what the examiner suggests, and the combination he suggests would not lead to the claimed subject matter.

Inherent in the examiner's rejection is that JP '152 provides some suggestion that the wiring members which electrically connect the solar cells modules be sealed in a resin. This is decidedly not the case, because JP '152 specifically teaches that the wiring members be in a terminal box, so there would be no reason to have the resin. Therefore, the combination of admissions and JP '152 neither discloses nor suggests sealing a wiring member which electrically connects solar cell sub-modules positioned next to each other.

Moreover, the structure utilized in JP '152 is entirely different from the prior art disclosed, for example, in Fig. 4 of the present patent application, and there is no reason to believe that those skilled in the art would have any reason to look for a usual feature in the different type of device disclosed in JP '152.

Furthermore, as may be seen in Fig. 12 of the present patent application, the wiring member 36 is sealed in resin between the base 31 and the base 37b, and the resin material bonds to the two bases. Claim 7 has been amended to clearly define this feature. At the same time, this feature is not taught or suggested either in the admitted prior art or in JP '152. Accordingly, Claim 7 is believed to be allowable.

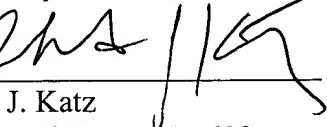
CONCLUSION

Each and every point raised in the Final Office Action dated October 28, 2004 has been addressed on the basis of the above amendments and remarks. In view of the foregoing it is believed that claims 5-8 are in condition for allowance and it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all pending claims be allowed and the case passed to issue.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Dated:

Respectfully submitted,

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ATTACHMENT A